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THE Work and Mercy

OF GOD

Conduceth to his PRAISE;

Or a Demonstration of the Visitation of Gods
Love to my Soul in the dayes of my Youth;

BEING

A Testimony of the Light of Christ in the Conscience,
which discovereth and judgeth Sin; and also (if loved
and obeyed) saveth from Sin, and redeemeth the Soul
unto God.

WITH

*A word to those that are young in years, for them to mind their
Creator in the dayes of their Youth.*

*A Faithful Warning to all People that are living in wickedness, for
them to return to the Lord (by true and unsained repentance)
with speed, before the Boesom of Gods wrath sweep them away.*

*An Invitation of Love to those that are seeking the Living God
in the Dead Forms.*

A Lamentation over those that are apostatized from the Truth.

*A word to all those who in words profess Truth, but in life and
works deny it.*

*A word to those who are convinced of the Way of Truth, but still
remain in the Worlds wayes, and continue in known disobedience.*

*A Salutation of encouragement to those that are newly convinced
of the Truth, and yeldeth obedience thereunto.*

A word of comfort and encouragement to the true Mourner in Sion.

A general Salutation of Love to the Children of Light.

By a Friend to all People, and one that desires the good of all Souls,
and is a Lover of all that loveth Truth, and a Companion to all that
walks therein, and a Sufferer for the Truth in Edmonds-Bury Com-
mon Goals.

William Bennitt.

Printed in the Year, 1669.

WVolk and Mercy

A Testimony of the Light of Christ in the O. Testament
which discovereth and judgeth Sin; and the way
to the Kingdom of Heaven and Life Everlasting
in the Kingdom of God.



Printed in the Year 1711

*A Demonstration of the Visitation of Gods Love to
my Soul in the dayes of my Youth, &c.*

Published in bowels of pity and love to all those that have desires after the Way of Truth, and are yet seeking it abroad in their imaginations, and are mourning and groaning under the burthen and weight of sin; hoping and desiring (that if the Lord will) such may meet with some encouragement and direction hereby, for them to turn their minds in to the Light of Christ in themselves, and in it to believe, and wait for power over, and freedom from sin, that true lasting peace in God they may come to witness, to the true & full satisfaction of their Souls.

All things that are reprov'd, are made manifest by the Light; for whatsoever doth make manifest is Light, &c. That which may be known of God is manifested in them, &c. Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way, by taking heed therunto according to thy Word; thy Word I have hid in my heart, &c. Eph. 5. 13, &c. Rom. 1. 19. Psalm 119. 9, 11.

When I was but young in years, the Lord God (of Light, Life and Power, of tender Love, of infinite Compassion and everlasting bowels of Mercy) was pleased then (in some measure) to visit me by or with his pure Light in my own Conscience, which many a time did check and reprove me for my sins, and brought my evil doings to my remembrance, and judg'd me in my own heart for evil,

and sometimes brought trouble upon my mind for my sins, but I was not then sensible that it was the Light of Christ Jesus (*who is the true Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the World*) which then in my own Conscience did check; reprove, and judge me for evil, and sometimes broke my false ease and rest in sin; in-somuch, as I could not go on in sin, wildness and vanity, without being somewhat troubled, terrified, and reprov'd for my sin at one time or other; though when I was among idle children, that were void of the fear of God, I ran into sin and wickedness with them; and for the present time, I acted in sin with great delight and joy; but when I came to be still, quiet, and alone in the fields, or elsewhere; then would the pure Witness of God arise in me with its reproofs, and set my sins in order before me, and brought my evil doings to my remembrance, which I had acted out of the pure fear of the Lord God, and then trouble for a time took hold on me, and sin became my burthen; but I soon got from under that burthen at ease and liberty again, and ran into sin and vanity again; and thus year after year I went on in rebellion against the Witness of God in my own Conscience, taking delight and pleasure in those things I knew was evil; yet the Lord God (whose tender bowels of pity and compassion did then in Mercy hover over me for good to me in that day) did sometimes stop me from speaking and acting that evil I intended to speak or do, and preserved me out of many gross evils, which many others were addicted unto, and overcome with. And in those dayes when I was alone in the Fields I cried and prayed unto the Lord; and desires were stirring in me after the knowledge of him, his Way and Truth; but I prayed to a God I knew not; I imagined a God afar off, and did not then know that it was the Lord that did search my heart, and discover unto me my thoughts, and judged me for sin; I then knew not that that was the Light, Way and Truth of God in my own heart, which sometimes begot desires in me to know the Truth, and to walk therein; but my mind was abroad, (as it is with many at this day, who have desires after Truth and Righteousness, but are seeking abroad in Carnal Ordinances, Forms, Likenesses, beggerly Elements, Rudiments of the World, Ceremonies and Traditions of men): and knew not that that in me was Truth which sometimes stoppt me from lying and swearing; and when I knowingly told a lye,

Iye, it would accuse me, when no man could accuse me for it; and as I grew up into years, for I may truly say, I have was something stirring in me, at times; after the Lord ever since I was six or seven years of age; and when I came to be about fourteen years old, and came to be a Prentize, and to be in outward servitude and bondage, it pleased the Lord, the compassionate God of infinite loving-kindness, to visit me more, then formerly, by his pure Light and Spirit, which increased in stirring with me, daily, that I scarce knowingly committed any evil, but the Light would soon judge me for it; yea, the Lord God with his pure Light and Gift did pursue me hard, and followed me close, calling to me in my heart, with his still voice, to come out of sin, out of evil words and works; but I (like *Samuel*, when he was a child) knew not that it was the Lord that did call; for he was, (though neer me) as a Stranger to me, and I knew not his voice, but went astray as a wandering Sheep, yet having desires to know the way to the Fold, and to know where the Lord feedeth his Flock, and causeth them to lie down in peace, quietness, and rest, where none can make them afraid; for indeed it was rest my Soul wanted, and true peace in God my Soul many a time longed for, and panted after; for, oh, I was oftentimes wounded, wounded, wounded because of sin, and for want of the enjoyment of the Love and Peace of God, I went many a time bowed down in spirit day after day with an aking Mind, grieved Soul, and wounded Consciences, with my eyes full of tears, and my heart full of sighing; thinking in my heart there was few (if any) in my state and condition; sometimes wishing, and saying in my heart, *Oh, that I were in a desert solitary place outwardly* (for so was my condition inwardly) *where no man inhabits, where I might have mourned and wept out my fill, and have poured out my tears unto the tender God of tender bowels of mercy, and have spread my complaints before him whom my Soul did then sometimes, in measure, long, thirst and pant after, even as the Hart panteth after the water Brooks:* And many a time I did get into a solitary place to ease my heart a little, in pouring out my tears and complaints to the Lord; for in those dayes many were my prayers and tears, for great was the burthen and load which I oftentimes went under day after day, which made me cry night and day to the Lord for peace and rest; yet I then not knowing that it was the Light of Christ in my Conscience that

that did break my rest and peace in sin; neither knew it to be a stay to the mind, and a bridle to my tongue; I many a time got into a false ease and liberty in idleness and wildness of youth, but it was broke again, and sorrow and trouble would take hold on my mind, and true desires would again be renewed in me after the Lord, and breathing and thirsting after Righteousness; and oh, my heart and soul was many a time made tender and soft, and oh, pity, pity and tender bowels of compassion was in me towards any that I thought was in my condition, and a tender love was secretly hid in my heart towards those that I then thought were the people of God; and I can truly say, my bowels and heart is open still, and often times pity, love, compassion and tenderness issues forth in me towards those that now are in that condition I then was in; oh, my soul, my soul cannot but in some measure sympathize with them, and in spirit bear a part of their burthens and sorrows in my bosom, and that not without some secret crys in my heart unto the tender God of bowels of pity on their behalfs; and partly for their sakes is this published, hoping (that if the Lord will) it may be of service unto some of them, and if the Lord order it so to be to them, or any, then will my end herein be answered thereby.

And In those dayes I frequented the Meetings of the People called *Independants*; (*viz.*) *Will. Bredges* Congregation in great *Yarmouth*, whom I then thought were the People of God, and yet I then saw that many of their lives and conversations, even some of the chief of them were not consistant with what they professed in words; and when I have been amongst them in the time of their singing Psalms, the pure Witness of God in my own heart hath (as it were) stopped my mouth, that I could not sing with them; but my heart in the time of their singing was broken into tenderness, and many were the tears of my eyes; and verily my outward man or earthen vessel hath quaked and trembled (this was before I was by Scorners called a Quaker, or had seen any of those People) and shaken like a leaf that is shaken with the wind (which might have been a sign of that shaking which since the Lord hath suffered to come upon them, which hath almost shattered and scattered them, who will shake all sandy Foundations, and blast all Professions that are out of the Light and power of God) by the working of the Light and Power of God in my heart, though I then knew not
that

that it was the Power of God that brought such a trembling upon me, and that did in some measure let me see, that it was not then a time of singing for me; for I was then in a strange Land, in the Land of Captivity, and could not sing the Songs of *Sion*, which I may truly say (not in the least enmity towards the people; for my soul beareth love and good will towards all men, and desire to tender and own the least true appearance of God in any) they were ignorant of, who were then singing what others had prescribed and made ready for them; I then wanted the enjoyment of the Love, Joy, Peace, and sweet Presence of God, which maketh glad the hearts of the Righteous, and causeth the lowly, meek and upright to sing (in the Spirit with understanding) for joy; not that Song or Songs, or Psalms which men have invented by their humane wisdom; (from which wisdom the Mysteries of Gods Kingdom is obscured and concealed) but the new and living Song, which the dead cannot sing, but the living that are raised and redeemed out of, and from the Earth, and from amongst men, even the ransomed of the Lord, that are returned from *Babylon* unto Mount *Sion*, whereon they stand with the Lamb, whom they have followed through many tribulations; and hath not loved their lives unto death; and hath washed their Garments, and made them white in his Blood, in and by whom they are become Virgins; and hath cast off all old Lovers, and are not defiled with the woman *Jezebel*; but through the Lamb have gotten victory over the Whore, Beast and false Prophet, and in the Heavenly Dominion of the Lamb (by whom they are made more then Conquerors) do they stand an the Sea of Glas mingled with Fire, with the Harps of God, and can sing a new Song of praise and thanksgiving *unto him that was dead, but is alive, and lives for evermore.*

And in all the times of my trouble of mind, and travel of spirit I never made known how it was with me, nor declared my condition to any Creature, though never so intimate with them, but kept it secret in my heart, pouring out my complaints to God, but not unto any man; yet I could gladly have had some to have known how it was with me, but I was straitned in my self, and kept it in obscurity; and in those dayes I knew not what it was that wrought and strove with me, and did so frequently judge and
reprove

reproye me for sin, and gave me power over many evils, which others were overcome withal, and raised strong desires in me after the Lord, and discovered unto me the thoughts of my heart: I say, I knew not then what it was, I was then not sensible that it was the Light of Christ Jesus, or a measure of the Spirit of Truth; neither did I then know I should have taken heed thereto, *as when a Light shining in a dark place, until the day had more and more shined, and until Christ the Day Star had arisen in my heart over all my Enemies;* but my mind was still gazing abroad, and imagining a God afar off, and he was very nigh me, but I knew him not, but was hunting abroad in my imaginations for that which was within me; the Pearl of great price was hid in my breast, but I knew it not; the Kingdom of God was at hand, but I was gazing for it abroad, whilst it (in measure) was working in my heart, like Leaven hid in three measures of Meal; &c. the Door into the Fold, the Entrance into Rest was within, but I was seeking it abroad; my Saviour was nigh, but I imagined him afar off, and knew him not nigh; neither did any man in those days direct my mind unto the Light and Gifts of Christ in my own heart; and as for the Teachers of the People, even they in the highest profession of God in words, were ready (they being ignorant and unpensible of the Gift of God in themselves) to speak blasphemy of the pure spiritual Light of Christ within (as many professors do at this day; yet notwithstanding make a large profession and confession of Christ in words, though in works deny him) and to say, that which troubles a man for his sins is a temptation of Satan, and thereby instead of directing the mind to the Light, draw away the mind more from the Light, and such are blind, and are under the wo, *that calls light darkness, good evil, and are in that spirit they were; who (though great Professors) said concerning Christ, He is mad, and hath a Devil, why hear you him;* but as some then replied, and said, *Are these the works of him that hath a Devil? Can the Devil open the eyes of the Blind?* So I may say, Is it the Devils work to discover Sin, and judge, condemn, and trouble a man (in the unconverted state) for sin? or is it not his work to lull people asleep in sin, and to cry peace to them in their iniquities, and to keep them satisfied with a profession of God, without the possession of a holy undefiled life? Is it his work to destroy his own Kingdom, which is sin? surely, no; that is only and alone the

the Work of Christ, the Light of the World, made manifest within to destroy the Devil and his works; he brings trouble upon the Transgressor, and ministers judgement against the Evil-doer; he kindles a fire in the earthly heart, and raiseth trouble, wars, and great tribulation within, before he be known to be the Prince of Peace, the Sabbath, the everlasting Rest for the Soul. And now I know infallibly that that which in those days did bring trouble upon me for my sins, and checked and judged for evil, and begat good desires in me after the Lord, was the pure Witness of God, the manifestation of his Spirit, the Light of his Son Christ Jesus, a measure of his Free Grace and Truth in my own heart; and if ten thousand should assert or affirm the contrary, I know their testimony will be a Lye. But, oh, alas for me, after all this long visitation of the Love, Goodness, and Mercy of the Lord to my Soul, and after all this trouble of mind, travel of spirit, desiring and seeking after the Lord, I got, oh, I got into a false ease in the fleshly nature, and into a wrong liberty and false security, (as it is with many professors at this day, who once were low, broken, and tender in heart, mourning under the load and burthen of sin, having sincere desires to serve God in holiness of life, who are now gotten into the form and likeness of that they then hungered and thirsted after, and are therewith satisfied, and feeding themselves with others words, and with knowledge without life, and so are gotten at ease in the pride fashions and vanity of the World, and are at liberty in the flesh, counting it their freedom to do those things that once was their burthen and bondage) and I became careless, and by disobedience I quenched the strivings of the Light of Christ in me; insomuch, as the burthen, trouble and sorrow which once lay heavy upon my mind; I felt little of; although the original and real cause which occasioned the burthen, sorrow and trouble (which was my sins) was not taken away, but augmented, and I through Rebellion had almost murdered the just and holy one in me, and had so grieved and wounded the Spirit of the Lord, that it had almost ceased striving with me, though at sometimes it would bring former things to my remembrance; and then some trouble and sorrow would seize upon me for a time, but I soon got over it again, and turned from the Grace into wantonness, and so forgot the Lord whom I had formerly desired and sought after; and my

heart ran a whoring after my old Lovers with my face turned back again to *Egypt* (the Land of Darknes, Wickedness, the Bondage house of Sin and Corruption) which before was partly turned toward *Canaan*, the Land of Light, Life and Rest, and so ran into such evils as I had formerly been kept out of by a secret power which I then knew not, and I grew wonton, careless and wicked, and my mind and heart taken off seeking the Lord, and run into, and after the vanity, pleasures and idleness of the world, delighting much in Musick and Dancing, Sporting and Gaming, and so made merry over the pure Witness of God, by sinning and rebelling against it, and by rejecting its reproof and strivings: Oh, oh the patience and long-suffering of the Lord was large towards me in that day, who long waited to be gracious to my Soul day after day, year after year, who in his justice might have cut me off in my sins and rebellion, and even have made me an example of his wrath; but oh, his mercy, his mercy and long-suffering was exceeding large to me, which by my Soul is not to be forgotten; but in and by the Spirit of Truth (which brings former things to remembrance, and sheweth things to come) am I to be kept in a living sense and remembrance of the great mercy, long patience, long forbearance, and long-suffering of the Lord God of Compassion towards me, and in the sense thereof he is worthy to be praised and honoured by my Soul, who would not that I should perish from his presence for ever: for after all this the Lord, the tender God of tender bowels of pity and compassion was pleased to visit my poor Soul again, even for his pure Seed sake, which he had not forgotten; but he remembered the poor and the needy, the captive exile, to deliver him out of the hand of him that was too strong for him, and to loose him, that he might not wholly die in the pit, and perish in the miry clay; and God's precious Truth, and pure Way of Righteousness, and everlasting Gospel of Light, Life and Peace I heard preached and declared by his precious Servants (who were, and are by scoffing *Ishmael's* Brood, in scorn called Quakers, whom I now own in the Lord) and the pure Witness of God in my own heart bore testimony to the Truth declared by them; but long it was after I was in some measure convinced of the Truth, before I freely gave up my heart to obey the truth; but the Lord in time did overcome my heart by the power of his Love, his inspeakable

able Love, and made me willing to resign up my heart in obedience to him and to his Truth, and to bow down to the Yoke, and to take up the daily Cross, which I learned by loving and taking heed to the Light, and to dispise the shame, and to follow the Lord in that way (*viz.* the Light which before had judged me for sin begat desires in me to know the Way) which I knew not while my mind was abroad, and knew not the Lord nigh, who now teacheth and guideth me by his Light and Spirit in the way of Truth and Righteousness, wherein I have found peace, rest and true satisfaction for my soul, and witness my Teacher nigh, though it hath been my portion, with many other Brethren, sometimes to eat the bread of Adversity, and to drink the water of Affliction, yet my Teacher and Comforter can none remove from me; but he is and hath been with me in the Prison-house, and in the Low Dungeon; so that which now keeps me in peace and unity with the Lord, and in fellowship with his people; the same thing, (and not an other) was it that did formerly check, reprove, and judge me for evil, and brought trouble upon me for my sins, and that raised desires in me after the Lord, as I have explicated in the fore-going lines; though I deny not but that I have now a greater measure of Light and Grace then I had then; yet the Light (in quality and nature) is the same; for although the Light or Seed of the Kingdom (which consisteth of Joy, Peace and Righteousness in the Holy Ghost) be in the unbeliever and unconverted, even as the least of all other Seeds, yet nevertheless where or in whomsoever it be received in the Faith, Love and Obedience of it, in such it grows and increases until it becomes the greatest in them, and under its shadow they come to sit with great delight, and its fruit becomes sweet to their taste; and as a little Leaven in three measures of meal, it worketh and operateth in the heart and minds of those that believe in the Light, until it hath wrought out the old leaven of malice, sin and corruption, and leavened the heart and soul into its own nature, frame and quality; so the same Light which did condemn me for sin when I was in disobedience to it, the same hath and doth save me from sin, and now justifies me as I am kept in the Faith and Obedience of it, and now it ministers peace and rest unto me, and before it ministred trouble and condemnation: So this I assert and affirm experimentally for an unerrable invincible truth, (against

all the Opposers, Gainsayers, Fighters, and Undervalluers of the Light) viz. that the Light of Christ (who is the true Light that lighteth every one that cometh into the World) even in the Conscience of that man or woman that is in unbelief, and in the unconverted state, is one in nature and quality with the Light in that man or woman that is in the belief of it, and converted by it; and the Light of Christ in the Conscience of the Drunkard and Swearer, that doth check, judge and reprove him for his sins, if it be believed in, loved and obeyed, is able to save him from his sins; but that man or woman that loveth evil and hateth the Light, and will not come to the Light, but reject it, such do not feel nor witness the saving healing vertue, and restoring, redeeming power of the Light, but is only unto them a Judge and Condemner; but they that receive it in the love and belief thereof, such in through and by the Light receive power to become the sons of God, and joynt Heirs with Christ, of the Kingdom of God which endureth for ever.

So blessed, blessed be the Lord my tender God who is worthy, worthy to be praised, praised by my soul in the sence of his Love, Goodness and Grace, whose Mercy hath been, and is wonderfull towards me, unto whom be honour, glory, praise, thanksgiving and obedience for evermore.

W. B.

And my Soul having obtained mercy of the Lord, and having tasted of his goodness and graciousness, and experienced his tender fatherly dealings with and towards my Soul, my heart is opened with love and good will to all people, desiring their good and eternal welfare in God.

To those that are young in years, &c.

Mind thy Creator in the dayes of thy Youth, before the evil day come
O c. Eccles. 12. 1, &c.

A Nd you who are yet young and tender in years, mind the Light of Christ in your Consciences which checketh and reproveth

proveth for evil, and idle words and works, and it will learn you (if you love it) to fear and mind the Creator in the dayes of your Youth, before the evil dayes come, and the years when ye shall say, we have no pleasure in them: Oh, say not any of you, we are young, and have many years yet to spend, wherefore we will take the pleasure and delights of our youth, and seek the Lord afterward, and repent when we are old, &c. but remember the Lord God your Maker giveth unto you life, breath and being, and how soon he may cut the threed of your lives, and take you away from all your delights and vanity you know not; for many he taketh away in their Youth: wherefore trifle not away your precious time in sin and vanity, in vain sports and gamings, or any wickedness, lest your hearts come to be hardened in ungodliness, and you grow old in Iniquity, and when it is too late you diligently seek repentance, but you find it not; wherefore take warning, and mind those things in time before it be too late, that concern the eternal peace, rest, and happiness of your immortal Souls, and first seek the Kingdom of God rather then the riches, glory and honour of this world, which is all passing away, and will not help in the day of calamity and hour of distress and misery which will overtake the wicked, and all those that forget God, as a Thief in the night; therefore mind and fear the Lord your Maker, and take heed unto the Light in all your Consciences, which is pure and holy, and hath no unity with any evil thought, word or work, and love and believe in the Light, that you may become children of the Light; if you love the Light it will save you from your sins, and redeem you from a vain conversation, and learn you to take up a daily cross to your own wills, desires, lusts and affections, and to yoke down the vain, wild, wanton, corrupt nature, that defileth and polluteth your hearts and minds, lives and conversations; and so you will come to be changed and born again of the Seed incorruptible, of the word of God which is nigh in the heart to be obeyed and done; but if you delight in evil-doing, and have the Light of Christ in your own Consciences which judgeth you for sin, and will not come to the Light, but live and abide in Darknes, and will not receive Gods Counsel and Warnings, nor hearken unto his Reproofs, nor have none of his Wayes, but will follow your own ways, wills and works, and fulfil the lusts and desires of your own hearts, and

vain

1002 vain devices and imaginations of your own minds, and will not that the Light should rule over you, to govern you in the pure fear of the Lord, and to lead you into holiness of life, to guide you into the Way of Truth and Righteousness, then will the Light be your condemnation, and leave you without excuse when the Lord renders unto you according to your works, and *the wages of sin is death, but the Gift of God is Eternal Life through Jesus Christ*: Therefore, dear people, love it and embrace it whilst it is near you, even knocking at the door of your hearts; oh, hearken to it, and let it have place in your hearts, and refuse not the Love and Mercy of the Lord rendered to you in the Light, nor harden not your hearts against the eternal good, peace and happiness of your own souls, lest the day of your visitation pass over, and the night of everlasting darkness, sorrow, misery and calamity overtake you, and shut you up for ever.

To all People that live and delight in Wickedness.

The shew of their countenance doth witness against them, they declare their sin like Sodom, and hide it not. Because I have called, and ye refused, &c. Ye have set at nought all my Counsel, and would have none of my Reproof, &c. I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh, &c. Behold the day cometh that shall burn as an Oven, and the Wicked, and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble, &c. Now consider this all you that forget God, lest I rear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver, Isa. 3: 9. Prov. 1. 24, 25, 26. Mal. 4. 1. Psal. 50. 22.

ANd you, oh people, that are void of the pure fear of the Lord God, and hath given up your hearts to work wickedness with greediness, who rusheth into sin and ungodliness, as the Horse rusheth into the Battle, and drinking up iniquity as the Ox drinketh in water, taking pleasure in unrighteousness, and delighting in uncleanness, and wallowing in the mire of your own filthiness and corruption, fulfilling the lusts of your unclean hearts, in Swearing, Lying,

Lying, Drunkennes, Whoredom, Pride, Couzening, Defrauding, and such like Wickedness, whereby you grieve the Lord day after day, and wound, bruise, burthen and oppress his righteous Spirit, as a Cart that is oppressed with sheaves: oh, repent, repent, and cease from the evil of your doings, and leave off your wicked ways, lest the Lord God tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver: Oh, tremble ye careless ones before the Lord Almighty, who can consume you in a moment, and cut you off in the twinkling of an eye; oh, dread the Lord God, and fear his great and dreadfull Name, for the hour of his Judgement is come; oh, stand in aw of him who made the Heaven and the Earth, the Sea and Fountains of Waters, who giveth the Sun for a light by day, and the Ordinances of the Stars and Moon for a light by night, who divided the Sea when the waves thereof roar, who hath his way in the Whirlwind and in the Storm, and the Clouds are as the dust of his feet, who meeteth out the Heavens with a span, and measureth the waters of the Sea in the hollow of his hand, he comprehendeth the dust of the Earth as in a measure, and weigheth the Mountains as in Scales, and the Hills as in a Ballance, in compararison of whom all Nations are but as a drop of the Bucket, and as the small dust of the Ballance. Oh, will you not fear the Lord, and dread his Majesty, and tremble before his presence, who is a terrible one to the Workers of Iniquity that will not repent; who cometh with Fire, and his Chariot, like a Whirlwind; to render his anger (against the wicked and ungodly) in fury, and his rebukes in flames of fire; for by his Fire, and by his Sword will he cut down the strongest Oakes and tallest Ceders, and will plead with all flesh, and the slain of the Lord shall be many; wherefore repent, repent, and tremble, tremble before the Lord God ye Workers of Iniquity; for the day, the mighty terrible dreadfull day of the Lord God Almighty is come, and yet a coming, and wo, wo to the Briers and Thorns that cumber the Earth, for the day shall burn as an Oven, and the Wicked, and they that do wickedly, and will not take warning and repent, (but still harden their hearts against the Lord, and against his precious Servants that warn you to repent, whose Souls mourn and lament over you in the sence of the sadness, wretchedness, miserableness and deplorableness of your conditions) shall be as stubble, and the day will burn

burn them up both root and branch; and the Fire will burn up the Briars and Thorns, and cleanse the Earth, that Truth, Righteousness, Justice, and Mercy, may spring and flourish therein: and the mouth of iniquity be stopt for ever: And the day of the Lord God will be upon every one that is proud, and lifted up against the Lord: and his anointed; and the loftiness of the stoutest in heart against the Lord, shall be laid low, and the haughtiness of men shall be humbled, and the Lord God holy just and true shall be exalted in that day, when the Wicked shall flee to the Rocks, and hide themselves as in the Caves of the Earth, for the fear of the Lord, and the glory of his Majesty, when he cometh to shake terribly the Earth, and to overthrow the Seat of Wickedness for ever, and to punish the World for their sins, and the Wicked for their iniquity, and cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and to lay low the haughtiness of the terrible: Wherefore, oh People, prepare, prepare by true repentance, with speed, to meet the Lord in the way of his Judgements, before his dreadful Fury break forth against you, as devouring fire: oh, bring forth fruits worthy of repentance and amendment of life; oh, why will you die and perish in your iniquities for ever? the Lord desireth not the destruction of a Sinner, but rather he should return in time, from his wickedness, and learn righteousness and live; yea, *Let the wicked forsake his wickedness, and the ungodly man his thoughts, and turn unto the Lord with his whole heart, and he will have mercy upon him; for with the Lord there is great mercy, and plentious redemption, who also is just in all his Ways, and equal in all his doings, and righteous in all his Judgments, and he will not be mocked by any, such as people sow such must they reap, and the wages of sin is death:* Oh, how many hath been the warnings of the Lord to the People of this Nation time after time, year after year, line upon line, precept upon precept? but how few hath ponderously weighed them, received them, and layed them to heart? And how hath the Lord in part executed his righteous Judgments in and upon this poor Nation? and how few hath learned righteousness thereby? but the greatest part of thy Inhabitants, oh *England*, are still daily adding sin unto sin, and heaping of iniquity upon iniquity, and so fitting themselves for a day of slaughter: And truly, a great and sore Plague is come upon many people, even hardness, hardness of heart

*nothing wanting here, see the
reprint of 1677.*

heart, so that indeed, neither the Warnings nor Woings, Mercies nor Judgments of the Lord will take impression on them, to move them to repentance; and in the fence of this my heart is grieved, and my Soul mourneth in secret, because of the hardness of their hearts; which doth signifie them to be as vessels of wrath fitted for destruction. Oh, how doth all manner of wickedness abound, and ungodliness appear with open face, and blush not at rebuke: oh, how doth Pride superabound, and peoples hearts so puffed up therewith, that many scarce know what to eat, drink, or put on; oh, the Fields are even white for the Harvest, Sinners grown ripe for Vengeance, Iniquity is coming to its full height, the Fats overflow with wickedness; oh, how are the Proud counted happy, and the Workers of Iniquity set up; but the Meek of the Earth are despised, and the humble and contrite ones are killed all the day long, and counted as sheep for the Slaughter; and they that reproveth Sin in the Gate are hated and persecuted, and he that departeth from Iniquity, and learns Righteousness maketh himself a prey: Oh, the Lord hath seen it, and it displeaseth and grieveth him, because of the multitudes of the transgressions and abominations of the Sons of men, and violence and cruelty that fillet the Earth; but the Lord will arise as a man of War, and ease himself of his Enemies, and avenge himself of his Adversaries; for because Judgment is not speedily executed against an evil work, therefore the hearts of the Sons and Daughters of men are set in them to do wickedly; but what will be the end thereof?

Oh *England*, oh *England*, how often would the Lord in mercy have gathered thy Inhabitants unto himself, as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings, but thou wouldest not? therefore hath the Lord in Judgment partly made thee desolate: Oh, thy great City, thy great City, whose abominations reached Heaven, and her Sins came up before the Most High? how hath the Lord God mighty in Power, and righteous in Judgment, layed her glory in the Dust, covered her dignity with Ashes, and marr'd her beauty with Burning! Oh, how hath he made of a City an Heap; of a defended City, a Ruin; of a Palace of Strangers, to become a ruinous Heap! And oh, how few of thy Inhabitants, oh *England*, hath weightily laid it to heart, or hath seriously, and diligently taken notice of the cause of the Destruction thereof!

the Lord could have destroyed the People with their Habitations ; but the Lord in Mercy spared them, that his Mercy might move them to Repentance ! Oh, *England*, how hath Judgment after Judgment been executed upon thine Inhabitants ? how hath the Lord visited thee with Plague, Sword and Fire, yet their hearts are still stout against the Lord, and his People ; their minds haughty, and they will not bow their hearts to the Lord, nor break off from their evil doings, and wicked ways ; therefore is his hand stretched forth still, and they that will not take warning and repent must feel his heavy stroke. Oh, say not any of you in your hearts, tush, the Lord hath done his worst ; oh, the Lord he hath begun, and he can make a full end, and who amongst you can stay his hand, or escape his stroke when he smites ? or where can you hide your selves from the Lord ? therefore bow, fear and tremble before him, and submit your selves, and meet him by true and unfeigned repentance, and that is the way for you to escape the stroke of his Fury.

The Lord is a God full of long-suffering, and full of patience and forbearance ; and long woeth Sinners, and waiteth day after day to be gracious, even to the Rebellious, but his patient forbearing will come to an end towards those that will by no means repent and be reclaimed from the evil of their wayes, and against such his Anger and Wrath will break forth as Fire, and they like Stubble, ready dry, will be consumed therein : Therefore you that have not yet wholly sinned out the day of your visitation, prize, prize that little time you have, and make good use thereof, in diligently minding and seeking after those things that concerneth your eternal peace, before you go hence and be no more. Oh, dear people, every where, my love is to you, and pity and tender compassion is in my heart for you, and your good and welfare eternally I desire, especially you unto whom I am known in the flesh, even you my Neighbours and Countrymen whose residence is in *Kirsty Peakfield, Layestonff*, and those parts : oh, my Soul tenders your eternal happiness, and desires the Salvation of your Souls, yea, love and good will is in my heart towards you, and to all people ; oh, that you your selves did tender, and seek after the Salvation of your Souls more then you do : dear People, your Souls are immortal, and must hereafter be in a sence and feeling of Joy, Peace and

and Rest; or else of Sorrow, Misery and Torment, even to all Eternity; wherefore it concerns every particular one, to minde, above all other things, and seek after the eternal peace and happiness of your Souls in time, before it be too late; it is sin, wickedness, unbelief and hardness of heart that doth separate people from the Lord, and that draws down the wrath and curse of God upon them; wherefore people must first be separated and cleansed from that (to wit, sin) which separateth them from the Lord, and from his Love, Peace and Blessing, before they can witness their reconciliation unto God in his Son, and enjoy his Love, Peace, and Blessings. Oh, dear people, I beseech you, do not deceive your own Souls, by being satisfied with a talk of being saved and redeemed by Christ, &c. whilst you remain in your sins; for whom Christ saves, he saveth from their sins, not in their sins; and they that witness Christ to be their Redeemer, are redeemed from a vain conversation, and have their consciences purged from dead works, and their hearts cleansed and washed in his Blood (which is his Life and Light) from sin and corruption, that so they might serve him in newness and holiness of life: Therefore consider, be still, serious and ponderous in heart, and retire your minds inward to the pure Light of Christ in your own Consciences, that true and faithfull Witness of God, which keeps a Record of the deeds done in the Body, and according to his Record must every man be judged according to his works, to take heed unto the Light, and it will shew you your conditions, and how it stands with your poor Souls to Godward; that, will deal plainly with you, and will not deceive you; though indeed, your Teachers (who preach for hire, and divine for money) hath, and do deceive you, by crying peace to you, and lulled you asleep in your sins, and hath (as it were) daubed you up with untempered mortar, and (as it were) sewing pillows under your arm-holes, so long as you put into their mouthes, and give them hire, and help to maintain their god, which is their Belly: but wo to such Teachers that feed with the Far, and clothe with the Wool; and for filthy lucre and gain from their Quarters will cry peace unto the wicked, unto whom (while they remain in their wicked state) there is no true peace saith the Living God; oh, they are Blind Leaders of the Blind; and how many are fallen into the Pit of Perdition, that hath

been lead by them ! therefore, dear people, cease from your Teachers, who hath not profitted you at all, but keep you ever learning, but never able to bring you to the knowledge of the Truth, which until you do come to know, freedom from the bondage of sin and corruption, you cannot witness ; therefore to the Light in all your Consciences come, for that is truth, and love it, and obey it, and you will by it receive power over sin, and be enabled to cast off the Yoke of iniquity ; and to take up the Yoke of Christ, and embrace that Cross which crucifies unto the world and worldly things unto the lust and wickedness thereof, and such are true disciples of Jesus that learn of him who is meek and low in their hearts, and that do deny themselves, and take up the daily cross to their own wills, thoughts, words, works, desire and affections, and follow him through many tribulations, in the narrow way of holiness ; for it is not he that calls Lord, Lord ; but he that doth the will of God that inheriteth the Kingdom of God ; not the Sayers, or Knowers of the Will of God are justified, but the Doers of the Will are justified ; not they that onely confess (with the mouth, day after day, that they are miserable Sinners, &c. (as both Priest and People do, and yet still year after year remain the same, if not grow worse) shall find mercy ; but they that (not only confess) but forsake, and turn from the evil (in heart, life and conversation) unto that which is good, shall find mercy and forgiveness, and remission of sins. Oh, mind the good thing in you which is grieved and burthened with the evil, and turn in your minds to it, and it will let you see those things that are reprovab : Drunkard turn in thy mind to the Light in thy own Conscience, and it will shew thee, judge and reprove thee for thy Drunkenness ; Swearer turn in to the Light, and it will judge thee for Swearing, for Lying, Pride, Envy, Malice, Reviling, Cheating, Defrauding, Covetousness, Fornication ; yea, *All things that are reprovab are made manifest by the Light, and that which maketh manifest is Light ;* thou that hatest the Light, and lovest thy evil deeds, and will not come to the Light, because it will reprove thee, there thou hast leasrd thy condemnation ; *For this is the condemnation of the World, that Light is come into the World, and men love Darknes rather than the Light, because their deeds are evil ; but they that doth good loveth the Light, and bringeth their*
deeds

deeds to the Light, to try them whether they be wrought in God; and such are justified by the Light; So while you have the Light, believe in the Light, that you may become Children of the Light; so unto the Light (in all your Consciences) I am made manifest, and in true unfained love, and bowels of pity tenderness and compassion to your immortal Souls have I cleared my Conscience, in giving you warning to repent and turn from the evil of your own wayes unto the Lord, while you have time, before the door of mercy be shut against you for ever, and time unto you be no more.

From one that renders the Eternal happiness and good of your Immortal Souls, a Sufferer in Bonds for the Testimony of a good Conscience,

William Bennet.

To those that are seeking the Living God in the Dead Forms.

Having a Form of godliness, but denying the Power thereof, from such turn away, &c. Why seek ye the living among the dead? he is not here, but is risen, &c. Know you not your selves, how that Christ Jesus is in you, except you be Reprobates. 2 Tim. 3. 5. Luke 14. 5, 6. 2 Cor. 13. 5.

AND all dear People that are scattered among the many Sects, and Heaps, who have honest sincere desires and thirstings after the Lord; oh, love and compassion is in my heart towards you; and my Soul pities you; and the more, because you are seeking the Living God among the Dead Forms, Shadows, Carnal Ordinances; beggerly (in comparison of the Life of Truth) Elements and Rudiments of the World, but cannot there find true lasting peace, rest, comfort and satisfaction for the immortal Souls: oh, Christ is risen, he is not there, his appearance is now more hidden, more invisible, more inward; therefore stay not in Shadows, rest not in the likeness, without Life; pitch not your Tent in the Form, with-

1040 without the Power; Come, come away, you thirsty ones, from the Wells of mans digging, which can hold no Water that will rightly and kindly satisfie your thirsty Souls, and wait to know the Spring opened in your own hearts, which comes from Christ the Fountain of Living water, and drink thereof and be satisfied, and go no more forth to the broken Cisterns; but wait within, in the Light for the Springs of Life to refresh your thirsty Souls: Oh, come out of the Shadows to the Substance, *Christ (the Light) in you, except you be Reprobates*: oh, the Spirit and the Bride says come, and he that drinketh, saith come; and let him that is athirst come and drink of the Water of Life freely; why do you spend your time for that which is not Bread, and your labour for that which doth not truly satisfie your Souls: oh, feed no longer upon the husks, upon words without Life, upon knowledge without Power; for that will puff you up in your own eyes, and elevate you in your own conceits, and shut you out from the Tree of Life; and though you may seem to grow rich, and increase with goods, and want nothing; yet when your eyes come to be opened, you will see your selves poor, blind and naked; for he that covereth himself with a covering of words and knowledges, and a Profession without Life, his covering is not the Fine Linnen, white and clean, which the Wise Virgins that follow the Lamb are cloathed with, who have Oyl in their Vessels, the Light, Life and Substance in themselves; but they that only gets words and knowledge into the comprehension, and grow rich in the brain, and have their Religion in their head, and know not the pure and undefiled Religion in the heart, such are foolish Virgins, that have oyl only in their Lamps, and though such may blaze, and give a seeming great light in words, yet such one day will want oyl, and their lights will go out; the Lord will dry up all standing waters that hath no Spring; he will blast all Professions out of the Light, all Gatherings out of the Name and Power of God, the Lord will scatter; therefore come away (from among them) you unsatisfied and thirsty ones, whose Souls pant after the Lord, and are weary of the Husks, and hunger after the Substance, the Living Bread from Heaven; turn your minds in to the Light in your selves; wait to know Bread in your own Houses, Christ in you, the Bread of Life, which the Living Soul feeds on, and lives by,
that

that you may know the fresh and green Pasture, and with us feed therein, and drink of the still Waters, and rest with us in (in the Light) the Fold; that so we may all know and have one Shepherd, and be all of one Sheepfold.

To those that are Backslided from the Truth.

Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works, &c. Return, oh, backsliding Israel &c. I will heal thy backsliding, &c. But if you will not hear my Soul shall weep in secret, &c. Because the Lord's Flock is gone into Captivity, Rev. 2.5. Jer. 3. 12. Hosea 14. 4. Jer. 14. 17.

AND you who have tasted of the Power of an Endless Life, and were convinced of the precious immutable Truth of God, and had in measure received it in the love and obedience of it, and by it were in part set free from the bondage of sin and corruption, and redeemed out of the pollutions of the world, but now are apostatized from the Lord, and hath forsaken his precious Truth and People, and like *Demos*, embraced this present world again, and are turned like the Dog to his vomit, and like the Swine that were washed, to wallow in the mire again, and hath made shipwreck of Faith and a good Conscience, and hath proved treacherous both to God and his People, and hath denied the womb that bore you, and the breast that gave you suck, and hath turned from the Grace of God into wantonness, and done despite to the Spirit of Truth, and hath trampled the Blood of the Covenant, wherewith you were in measure sanctified, under your feet as an unholy thing, and hath slain the Just, and crucified the Righteous in your selves. Oh, poor, poor hearts, my Soul pities you, and mourns in secret over you, and cannot but lament the sadness and deplorable condition of your conditions; oh, better you had never known the Truth, then after you have known it to turn from it to your old Lovers again: oh, whither will you go, you Backsliding

sliding ones, where and in what will you hide your selves from the Lord, now you are departed from him? if you go from Sea to Sea he will find you out : and what can defend you from his wrath? oh, where, and in what can you find true peace, rest and happiness for your Souls, seeing you have forsaken him in whom alone it is to be enjoyed? Oh, are you not sensible that you want true peace? Oh, you that have forsaken the Fathers House of plenty, and are gone out among the Swine who feeds upon the Husks; oh, poor hearts, do you not sometimes a little come to your selves, and then remember the Fathers House? and do you not then find some inclination and desire to return again? if you do return, how know you but that he will have compassion on you, and receive you into his House again? though you have been spending your Portion among Harlots, and have dealt so treacherously by him, and so much wounded and grieved him, and his children; yet notwithstanding, if you can thoroughly return unto him with your whole hearts, he can and will receive you, and heal your backslidings, and blot out your sins, and forgive you your transgressions against him, and love you freely. Therefore return, return you backsliding ones, why, why will you die and perish for ever; oh, repent and do the first works; turn your minds inward to the pure and just One in your selves, which you have grieved, wounded and oppressed, as a Cart that is oppressed with Sheaves : Oh, that you might look upon him whom you have pierced, and behold him whom you have wounded; and even mourn and lament over him : Oh, to the pure, holy, faithful Witness of God in your own Consciences, which you were at first turned unto you must come, and the righteous Judgment of the Lord you must own, and wait in; yea, a dreadfull Cup you must drink before you can enjoy true lasting peace in God : oh, that you could be willing to drink it, and to pass again through the Fire and Sword, yea, through Death, to come to eat again of the Tree of Life, and live for ever : oh, that all you that are betrayed (like *Sampson*) of their strength by the Adulterous mind, so as that the *Philistine*, the uncircumcised nature hath prevailed over you, and put out your eyes, that you are become blind, and cannot see that beauty and comeliness in the Lord and his Truth, which you once saw; oh, that the Lord would be pleased to visit you again; that (like as the hair of *Sampson* grew again,

again, his strength increased ; so that he slew more of his Enemies at his death, then he did in all his life) so the Seed of God may be raised again in your hearts, and the strength therein and thereby may be renewed and grow, that by your dying again unto that which is contrary to the will of God, you may witness greater victory in the Lord over your Enemies ; and know more of them slain then ever you did. Oh, you that find, and are sensible that the Lord hath not wholly given you over ; but is yet striving with you by his pure Witness in you to return unto him, his Truth and People again ; oh, return before it be too late, and before the door of Mercy befor ever shut against you ; for then if you seek the Blessing with tears, as Esau did, you will not obtain it ; and though you call, *Lord, Lord open unto us, we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and in thy Name we have cast out Devils, and have had power over unclean spirits, and have done many great works ; yet notwithstanding he will say, Depart from me ye Workers of Iniquity, I know you not :* therefore be sober and serious, and ponderously, consider, and let these things take deep Impression in your hearts, which are wrot in true love, pity and bowels of Compassion to your Immortal Souls, by a Mourner over you, and a Traveller in Spirit for your Restoration.

To those that profess Truth, and yet walk contrary to Truth in Life and Conversation.

For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now I tell you weeping, that they are Enemies to the Cross of Christ, &c. Phil. 3. 18, 19.

Ad all you who make a Profession of the Light and Truth in words, but in works deny it, whose Conversations are loose and vain and not consistant with your Profession, nor answerable, but repugnant to Truth, you do not conduce to the honour of Truth, but produce a dishonour thereunto by your loose disorderly walking, whereby you also give the Enemies of Truth advantage against the Truth for them to reproach the Truth, and those that walk and live in the Truth, and also you are a stumbling block in

1017 the way of the simple-hearted that hath a love and desire towards Truth, and a grief and burthen to the Faithfull that love the Truth, and live in it, and seek the glory and honour thereof; and also you deceive your own Souls, by being satisfied with a profession of Truth, without the possession thereof; and you have no true peace where you are, nor unity with the Lord, nor fellowship with his People; for the unity and fellowship of the Saints is in the Light and holy Life of God; and they that are out of the Light (though they profess it) are out of the unity of the Faith, and fellowship of the Sons of God, and such are but gotten into the outward Court were the *Gentiles*, the uncircumcised in heart can come; but blessed are all they that doth the will of God, and keep his Commandments, and hath right to the Tree of Life, and enter through the Gate into the City, where no unclean thing can come: So all you that profess Truth, and walk contrary to the Truth, come to be faithfull and obedient to the Truth, that in the Way of Truth and Righteousness you may walk as becometh Truth, and that in the Light you may shine as Lights in your holy Lives, and blameless unspotted Conversations, to the praise and glory of God, and to the peace, rest, comfort and happiness of your own Souls: verily no Hypocrite in Sion can be hid from the Lord, who giveth the Churches to know that it is he that searcheth the heart and tryeth the reins, who saith, *I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every one according as his work shall be.*

To all those that are convinced of the Truth, but still remain in the worlds wayes.

If you know those things, happy are you if you do them: He that knoweth the Fathers Will, and doth it not, is worthy of many stripes,
John 13. 17.

ANd all you that are convinced of the Truth and Way of God, but doth not resign up your hearts in obedience to walk therein, but still remain in the broad way of the World, partaking with them of their Sins, Idolatry and false worship; and though
you

you see the vanity and evil thereof, yet (for by ends, and carnal self-interests, to save your selves from reproach and suffering) you joyn with them therein against the pure Witness of God in your own Consciences; and if you continue partaking with them of their Sins, how can you but expect also to partake of their Plagues? except you haste out from among them, and embrace and receive the Truth in the love and obedience of it: Oh, Come out, come out from amongst them, and be you separated, and touch no more the unclean thing, that the Lord may receive you unto himself, and become your God, and you become his People: Oh, you that know the Fathers Will, and doth it not, are you not worthy of many stripes? Oh poor hearts shun not the Cross any longer, neither be ashamed of the reproach, nor ashamed of the Lord and his people before men; but give up your hearts to obey the Lord and his precious Truth, and take up the daily Cross, that crucifies unto the World and worldly things unto the Sin, wickednes, formal Worshipps, vain Custom, Ceremonies, Pride and Vanity thereof, and follow the Lamb in the narrow way of holiness; and be willing to suffer with Christ, and you shall reign with him; and love not your lives unto death, and you shall have a Crown of Life: Oh, how long hath the Lord been woing many of you day after day, if not year after year; and hath long waited (knocking at the door of your hearts) in his Grace, to be gracious unto you, who desireth not that you should perish in your Rebellion and disobedience: oh, that the sence of his Goodness, Mercy and Patient-forbearing towards you might overcome your hearts, and make you willing to resign up your selves to walk in the way of Truth, before the Lord cease striving with you, (who hath said, *his Spirit shall not always strive with man*) lest the day of your visitation pass over your heads: Therefore come forward you that halt and linger behind in the Borders of *Babylon*, and Suburbs of *Egypt*; and come nigh you that stand afar off gazing to see what will become of us; *He that is not with me, (said Christ) is against me; he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad; none can serve (two Masters) God and Mammon.*

To those that are newly Convinced of the Truth.

Ye were like Sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your Souls : He shall gather his Lambs in his Arms, and carry them in his Bosom, 1 Peter 2. 25. Isaiah 40. 11.

ANd all you who are newly convinced of the precious Truth and way of God, and hath in measure received Truth in the love and belief of it, and hath, and daily do give up your hearts to obey the Truth, and to walk in the Way of Righteousness, and Path of Holiness : dear ones, unto you my heart is open in the tender bowels of my heavenly Fathers Love; and happy and blessed of the Lord God are you if you do not faint, nor grow weary in your minds, nor turn back again, as some hath done, but persevere on to the end. Oh, dear Babes whom the Lord, mighty in power, hath by his out-stretched arm brought out of *Egypt*, the Land of Darkness, and House of Bondage, and hath set your faces towards *Canaan*, the good Land of Liberty, Light, Rest and Peace : Oh, travel on, travel on ye weak ones in the strength of the Lord, and drawings of his Light, and look not back to *Egypt* again, remember *Lot's* wife; and fear not (the god of the World, the Prince of the power of the airy mind, even that wicked spirit that once had dominion in and over you, and kept you bond-slaves in darkness to sin and corruption) though he (the Enemy of your Souls Liberty, Peace and Rest) may pursue hard after you with his whole Host of Temptations, Snares and Allurements, both inward and outward; and also a Sea of Trouble, Straits, Difficulties & Sufferings may appear in your way, both within and without, and Mountains of Fears, Doubts, and carnal Reasonings on every side; and also something in you ready to murmur, complain and say, oh, that we had tarried still in *Egypt*, and not set one step towards *Canaan*, for the Way is so strait, and the Path so narrow, the Sufferings

ings so hard, and the Difficulties and dangers so great, and various, that we fear we shall perish by the way, and not get to our desired Rest: therefore let us turn back again, before we go any further; oh, fear not, neither turn back, but stand still from reasoning carnally; and look not at the Straits, Trials, Dangers, Sufferings and losses that may appear before you; neither look at your own weakness, feebleness and inability, nor at the strength and temptations of your Enemy; but look up (ye little ones) unto the Lord, and trust you in the strength of his arm; for he is God all-sufficient for you; therefore cast your care upon him, and he will make a way for you through the Sea, and divide the waters of the great Deep, and make a way for you in the Wilderness, and a path through the Thickets, and make the crooked strait before you, and the rough smooth; he will throw down the Mountains, and remove away the Hills, and lead you in a way you know not, and in a path you never before trod in, and will make the hard things easie unto the willing and obedient; that turneth not back again to their old Lovers; but love Truth and Righteousness; and follow on to know the Lord in his Way; all such he will give to drink of the Brook by the way, and feed with Bread from Heaven, whereby you shall be refreshed, and your strength renewed daily, in which strength you shall be able to travel on without fainting; and to run and not be weary until you come to your desired rest, and see the travel of your Souls, and be satisfied with the enjoyment of that you have travelled after: So the Lord be with you, and keep your eye single unto himself, that your hearts may be full of Light, that nothing may cause you to stumble and fall into the snares of the Enemy, who hath hindred many that once begun to run well; oh, mind, and keep to that in your own hearts which makes you truly sensible of your particular states and conditions, and in that sense daily wait upon the Lord diligently, and patiently for the sweet refreshings from his presence, and for the distillings of his Heavenly dew, that so the tender plants of Righteousness, and Lilly of holiness may grow and spring in all your hearts; that the little Seed of Life may become as a great tree, and every one of you may witness a sitting under your own Vine (Christ in you the hope of glory) and none to make you afraid.

10/8 And dear Friends, look not out at others, but keep at home, in the Light, the Tent, *Jacob* shall dwell alone, and not be numbered among the Nations; *Esau* he hunts abroad, and grows weary and faint, and then sells his birth-right for a Mess of Pottage; what if some stumble and fall from the Truth? let not that shake you; Truth is the same still, and changeth not; and if you see some turn aside from us into a self-separation from the Body of Friends, and endeavour to draw Disciples after them, let not that cause you to stumble and question the certainty of Truth; neither be you drawn away, and tost about like children by them; but keep to the Light, and in it follow the footsteps of the Flock; but follow not the footsteps of the wandering Sheep, that hath left the Flock, and are gone astray, who are like to perish by the devouring Beast and Enemy of their Souls, except in time they return again to the Fold; and if you see some (amongst our selves) setting, or keeping up that thing or practice which is out of the comly, descent Order of the Body, and not consistent with Truth's Government, let not that beget an occasion of stumbling in your minds; but be still, and keep your eye single to the Lord, and walk as you have them for an Example (that are over you in the Lord) who fully follow Christ Jesus; and as for that which is only set up and held up by man, out of Truth's Order, it will die and pass away, and Truth will out-live all. So unto the Lord that hath called you out of Darkness, to walk in his marvellous Light, do I commit you to be preserved unto himself unto the end, *For many are called, but few chosen; he that abides to the end, the same shall be saved.*

To the true Mourner in *Sion*.

To appoint to them that mourn in Sion, and to give them the Oyl of Joy for Mourning, &c. Blessed are you that mourn, for you shall be comforted. They that soweth in Tears shall reap in Joy, &c. Isa. 61, 12; Matth. 5. 4. Psal. 126. 5, 6.

OH, lift up thy head thou bowed down, thou Mourner in *Sion*, who are as one alone in a solitary place, and few see thee, or know-

knoweth thy sorrow or truly sensible of thy grief, or behold thy tears, who art (in thine own eye) as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit; as a wife of youth rejected, who appears in thy own eyes as it were miserable and wretched, mourning in the sence of thy own (as thou thinkst) unworthiness, failings, inability, emptiness and poverty, who art ready to say, (with sorrow) Where is there any so poor, empty, barren and unfruitfull to God as I : Oh I can do nothing for the Lord except (like *Mary*) weep behind him (thinking my self scarce worthy to see his face) and wash his feet with my tears, whilst others sit at the table with him, and eat of the fatness of his house, and drinketh of the new wine of his Kingdom; but alas for me, my tears are my meat and drink, because of the oppression of my Enemy who saith to my soul, Where is thy God? dost thou think thou shalt ever be worthy to behold his Face, to receive his Love, and to have the Smiles of his Countenance, And thou (O mourning one) by hearkning to, and believing thy Enemy, becometh (in thy own eye) like an alone Sparrow upon the house-top; and as the alone Quayl in the Stubble-field; and as a Dove alone, mourning for the loss of her Mate; and so thou layest thee down in Sorrow, and makest it thy Bed, and Grief thy Sheets, Tears thy Pillow, and Sighing and Mourning thy sleep, whilst thou believest thy Enemy, and entertainest those fears, doubtings and carnal reasonings (which he insuseth into thy heart) as thy Companion : But arise I say unto thee, in the Name of my God, and thy God, of my Father, and thy Father) arise out of thy Bed, for thy Beloved is at hand, and knocketh at the door of thy heart; arise out of thy Bed of Sorrow, Fears and Doubtings, and by Faith let in him whom thy Soul loveth; say not, I am not worthy of him, but rather say, *Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief, strengthen my Faith, make me more worthy of thee* : Oh, shut him out no longer by unbelief and doubtings and by reasoning with, and hearkning unto the Enemy of thy Soul's joy, peace and comfort, who would always keep thee from thy Beloved; and would daily add Sorrow to thy Sorrow, and Affliction to thy Grief, and Weight to thy Burthen, that he might (if he could) wholly sink thee down into the Pit of despairation for ever : wherefore hearken no longer unto him, for he was a Lyar from the beginning; entertain him not, nor his false insigations any longer (nor by unbelief keep not him out any longer whom

whom thou lovest and much desirest) but by that small measure of Faith thou sometimes feelest in God, though it be but as a Grain of Mustard seed, endeavour to thrust and keep out thy Enemy, and to remove the Mountains of Fears and Doubtings out of thy way, and by Faith embrace him whom thy Soul desires more then Rubies, or much fine Gold; that so the nights of thy Sorrow and Mourning for him in thy Bed of Fears and Doubtings may be turned into sweet repofes with him in his Bed of solace; that thou may say with gladness of heart, the false Accuser is cast out, and my Beloved is come, is come, and his reward is with him; he hath taken me from my mourning state into his Banqueting-house of Joy, Peace, Rest, and true satisfaction, and his Banner over me is Love; and now my sorrow is turned into joy; and I that once sat mourning in the Pit of doubtings and unbelief, bath the Lord (upon the wings of Faith) raised up to come to sing in the height of *Sion*, and to flow to the goodness of my God, who hath exalted my horn in him, and enlarged my mouth over my Enemy, whose mouth was enlarged over me in the day I bowed under him through unbelief and doubtings: oh, then feebleness possessed my loyns, weakness my knees, and faintness my heart: so that when I rose up to go (towards my Beloved) I fell by doubtings and fears; but now, I that stumbled am (by Faith in the Power of my God) girt with strength, and the Bow of the mighty man (that prevailed against me) is broken in pieces, who so often wounded me with his darts, that I was like to poor *Lazarus*, full of wounds, bruises and sores; but the Great Physitian of Souls hath healed me with the Oyl of Faith and Salvation; and now I find that it is the Lord that bindeth up the broken in heart, and healeth all their wounds: oh, blessed be the Lord who hath exalted my low estate, and brought me from off the Dunghil, and given me a Mansion in the Fathers House, and a place at the Table with his Children; though I once, by hearken to my Enemy, said, I was a Dog, and not worthy to eat of the childrens bread; and so I kept good things from me by yeilding to my Adversary, who would still have fed me with his food, even the dust of the Earth, that so I might have continued always weak, lean, barren and feeble, and never to have been able to overcome him; but the Lord my tender God (who thought upon me in the day of my distress, when I was poor and needy) hath rebuked him, and hath put him under my feet,
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the mighty the Lord hath brought down from his Seat, and exalted him of low degree, he hath delivered *Jacob* out of the hand of him that was too strong for him, and though he was a worm, and no man, and the cry was, *How shall Jacob arise*, yet the Arm of his God hath raised him from the Earth, and hath set his feet upon the necks of his Enemies, and hath given him power to tread upon the mighty, as the Potter treadeth Clay, and *this is the Lords doings*, and it is *marvelous in the eyes of his Servants*, blessed be his Name for ever, it is the Lord that *lifteth up the weak hands that hung down*, and *strengthens the feeble knees*, and *make strait their paths*, that *that which is lame may not be turned out of the way*, but *that rather it may be healed*; that the halting may go upright, and the lame may leap as an Hart, and the tongue of the dumb might sing of the goodness of the Lord, and the Mourner rejoice in him whose Mercy endureth for ever. So believe, hope and trust you in the Lord all ye that love him, and mourn and long for him, and in patience and contentedness (without fainting in your minds) wait for him; for the Lord is good to man that waiteth upon him, to the soul that seeketh him; and it is good both to hope and quietly to wait upon the Lord more then he that wanteth and waiteth for the morning; for with the Lord there is great mercy and plentiful redemption, who redeemeth *Jacob* out of all his trouble, and is with him in the fire, and in the water; and in all his afflictions he forsook him not: therefore trust you, hope, rely and depend you upon the Lord all you that love him, and cast your care upon him, for he careth for you, whose tender compassion and faithfulness will never fail to the House of *Israel*.

A General Salutation of Love to the children of Light.

AND all dearly beloved Friends every where, who are faithful to the Lord and his Truth in your several measures and places, my very dear & unfained love in the precious Truth of our God extends unto all the honest and upright in heart, who loveth and delighteth in Truth and Righteousness, and seeketh the praise honour and glory of God alone, grace and love be with you, mercy and peace attend you, joy and comfort fill you, and the blessing of the Most High rest upon, and remain in and with you day and night, and the Lord keep you all in the Faith of the Elect Seed, in which is your victory over the world, in which stand fast, and keep your dominion in the Lord, over

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the Earth and earthly things, that the Earth may be the footstool of your minds, and Heaven your Throne, and you to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus; and to use the world as if you used it not, being loose in heart to that which perish with the using; oh, that all Friends that are free from, and void of the cares of this life, and combrances of this world may prize (and stand fast in) their freedom, and not be forward and hasty (in the affectionate part) to run their selves into bondage to those things that profit not, but hindreth to God-ward, and prove as briers & thorns to the choaking or quenching of the growth of the Seed of Life in the heart; there is a mind that hunts and desires after (and is ready (if it be not limited) to form and create unto it self) a freedom that standeth not in the liberty of the Sons of God; the liberty of Sons of God, and Children of the Light stand in that which is a yoke to the worlds liberty, and their freedom stands in that which is bondage to the carnal mind, and crucifieth unto the world and worldly things; also there is a mind that is ready to endeavor and seek to put off, and to keep out of those things (which in their proper place may be said to be lawful) that it seeth it hindreth the growth into the Eternal, and endangereth the Souls standing to God-ward; and truly that is the more purer mind that serves (one Master) God alone; and indeed, dear Friends, I am ready to desire that this mind (which was in Christ Jesus) may have dominion in our hearts more and more; that as Strangers and Pilgrims we may be in and to the world, and the love thereof, and the Lord alone become the object of our love, and his Truth the covering of our eyes, that so the desire of our Souls may be unto him, and unto the remembrance of his Name, which is like precious ointment pour'd forth, giving a pleasant smell, and a sweet delectable savour, and therefore doth the Virgins love him, and remember his Love more then wine; yea, more then Father, Mother, Husband, Wife, Children, Silver, Gold, Houses, Lands; yea, he is the chiefeft to them of ten thousand, and the upright loveth him, for he is altogether comly.

Oh, dearly beloved Friends, much hath the Lord God of power done for us, since the day he found us laid among the pits, and raised us up from the Dunghil of our own corruption, and said unto us, live, who were dead in sins and trespasses: oh, how greatly hath he blessed and prospered us in despite of that spirit that hath so eagerly sought and endeavoured to devour us, and extinguish us from being a people, and

and hath even made us a Family like a Flock, and though *Balaam* and *Balaam's* Spirit (the Beast *Jezabel* and false Prophets) hath sought enchantments against us, to curse us; yet the God of blessings hath greatly blessed us in our Sufferings, Tribulations and Afflictions, and hath made *Joseph* as a fruitful Bough by the wall, whose Branches grows over the wall, (that doth and will let until it be taken out of the way) though the Archers of *Babylon* hath shot at him, and grievously wounded him, yet his Bow (notwithstanding his great Affliction) hath abode in strength, and the hands of his arms hath been made strong by the hand of the mighty God of *Jacob*, who hath blessed *Joseph*, and unto the uttermost bounds of the Everlasting Hills shall he be blessed for evermore.

Oh, dear Friends, if any People now in being upon the Earth hath cause to speak well of the Lord, and to trust in his holy Name, we are the People; for mightily and wonderfully hath the mighty God done and wrought for us, though the blind world see it not: oh, how have we been as Lambs among Lions, and yet not devoured, but wonderfully preserved by the secret Power and invisible Arm of the Lord our Shepherd, who hath been our defence, when the Beasts of the Forrest hath come forth to devour, and the Wolves hath been greedy of their prey, then hath the Lord fought for *Mount-Sion*, and defended the Hill thereof; and though some said, We'll pursue, we'll overtake, our lust shall be satisfied on them; we'll draw our Swords, and our hands shall destroy them; yet how hath the Lord blown in his wrath upon them, and the Sea of his Judgment hath covered them, and they are sunk as Lead in the bottom of the mighty Waters, and we yet (through mercy) are alive, and have a being among the Living, to speak well of the Lord, and to make mention of the goodness of our God and to declare of his kindness, and to praise him for his works, which are marvelous in our eyes: oh, his Love, his Mercy, and tender Fatherly care over, and towards us extends beyond the demonstration of words: and oh, let the fence thereof be engraven upon the table of our hearts, that it may humble us and keep us low before the Lord, and be an obligation upon every Soul of us, to bind and engage us unto the Lord and his Truth for ever.

How mightily hath the Lord limited and quietted the raging Sea, and made a calm? oh, that all Friends might take notice of the great Mercy and Love of the Lord to us in this particular, and mind the end of the Lord therein, and let us all take heed we sin not, because Grace and Mercy to us abounds, lest it provoke the Lord to anger, and be a moving

moving cause to induce him to let forth the wind, and suffer a Storm again. Oh, that none might get into a false ease and liberty, and wrong security, because of the present calm; but all to keep retire in that which fitteth and maketh ready for trials when they come, in by and through which we have been upheld and preserved hitherto, even by the secret Power and Arm of the Lord, which is not shorned that it cannot save, but is the same that ever it was, and it hath been our Helper in six troubles, and in the seventh hath not been wanting to us to help us when there hath been none to help, and to support and uphold us when there hath been none to uphold, but Loads, Burthens and Oppressions hath been heaped upon us, and to comfort us, when nothing but sorrow and trouble from this world compassed us about, and when we have had nothing as from men but the bread of Adversity, and the water of Affliction; even then hath the Lord our tender God been the Comforter of our hearts, the Restresher of our souls, and the Rejoycer of our spirits, and the Lifter up of our hands; when we have been bowed down with the Oppressions of our Enemies, his Presence hath been with us in the Prison-house, and in the low Dungeon, and hath not left us to this day, and assuredly never, never, never will leave us, if we leave not him, but will be with us until we have finished our course, and fulfilled the days of our appointed time, and our change come.

So dear Friends, unto the Lord I commit you, who knoweth how it is with all his Babes and Children, and beholdeth all their trials, straits and sufferings, inward and outward, and his ear is open to the cry of the poor, and groanings of the needy, who is God: all-sufficient for all those that trust, hope, rely and depend upon him, and able to keep them by his power through faith in his Name, unto his heavenly Kingdom: So the Lord be with you all, and the Almighty protect and defend you, and keep you from evil, unsported from the World, and preserve you in Love, Peace and Unity with himself, and one with another in his innocent unsained Love, in his Light, Life, Power and Truth, and make: and keep you all of one heart, and one mind, and one soul; that you all with one consent may still worship and serve the Lord God in the one Spirit, and the one Truth, in which I dearly greet, salute and embrace you all, and remain your Friend and Companion in the patience and tribulation of Jesus: Farewel dear Friends.

*Written in Edmonds Bury Com-
mon Goal, the 11th Month, 1667.*

William Bennitt.

THE END.

